REMARKS

The office action and the references cited therein have been carefully considered together with the present application and claims 1, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23 and 24 have been amended to more accurately define the present invention and to emphasize pre-existing differences between the invention claimed and the prior art that has been applied by the examiner. As a result of these amendments, it is believed that all claims are in condition for immediate allowance.

The examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1-5, 12, 15 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Kadota. It is strongly believed that neither of these patents, applied singularly or in combination, teach or suggest the method of amended claim 1. The examiner has previously acknowledged that Okada fails to teach the step of the server querying step as previously written, but contended that Kadota meets this step. Applicant has amended this step, with the changed language now reading: "wherein said peripheral device identification information comprises at least the manufacturer's serial number of the peripheral device."

The examiner's combination is still believed to be deficient because Kadota does not teach or suggest this step singularly or in combination with Okada. Applicants maintain their assertion that this combination is an improper hindsight reconstruction. The examiner's stated motivation of identification information allows the server to keep track of the exact device being used is believed to be flawed because Okada already has identification information that allows a server to keep track of the exact device being used, but it is different from what is claimed.

As is indicated at column 10, lines 2-15, as well as column 8, lines 47-48 of Okada, a channel ID is previously assigned to each peripheral and therefore it doesn't need any identification information that might be provided by Kadota. It is also submitted that Kadota would not be consulted by one of ordinary skill in the art for the reason that Kadota is not a server and is not have any network environment context. It

is simply a personal computer that has a port monitor for monitoring logic ports LPT1, LPT2, etc., as well as "COM1", "COM2", or USB ports.

The examiner also distorts the teachings of Kadota in the attempt to characterize Kadota as supplying the deficiencies of Okada. Even assuming that one could legitimately and properly combine Kadota with Okada, Kadota does not have "a server querying . . . for information which identifies the peripheral device, wherein said peripheral device identification information comprises at least the manufacturer's serial number of the peripheral device". Kadota does not obtain the manufacturer's serial number of the peripheral device. Kadota uses the model number of the printer as part of its port name and also assigns sequential random logical port numbers.

While Kadota speaks of serial number, it is clear from column 7, lines 42-50 that the serial number is a number that is created by the CPU and not the manufacturer's serial of the peripheral device. This is quite different, because Kadota does not obtain this information from the peripheral itself, it makes it up. This leads to the problem that users cannot tell which device is which. Similarly, as set forth in column 8, lines 18-23, the link name is created and registered simultaneously with creation and registration of the serial number.

Claim 1 as now amended states that it is "a method of assigning a predetermined maximum number of logical ports...", and that "the server initially assigning a logical port identification of an available unassigned one of the logical ports for a peripheral device..." Neither Okada nor Kadota teach or suggest this functionality singularly or in combination. Okada teaches contention handling for multiple functions of a composite peripheral. The present invention is concerned with assigning a predetermined maximum number of logical ports. Okada has no limit of port numbers and is not concerned with whether ports can be reused or not. Okada just sequentially increases the number that is assigned. It is a different manner of operation and fails to teach or suggest applicants' method.

For these reasons, it is believed that claim 1, as amended, is neither taught nor suggested by Okada, applied singularly or in combination with Kadota.

The argument that has been made with regard to claim 1 equally applies to the other independent claims 13, 15 and 20 and it is therefore believed that these claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

With regard to the dependent claims, they necessarily include the features of the independent claims from which they depend and in addition add other functionality or features that are not found in those claims and for that reason alone, the dependent claims are also believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

With regard to the additional functionality, claim 10 recites that additional steps are performed as a result of comparing said identification information received from the peripheral device with said information maintained in said table and if it fails to detect a positive comparison, performs the steps of searching the table to determine if the number of logical port entries is less than the maximum number of entries, indicating one or more logical port entries are available, as well as assigning an available logical port identification to an unassigned peripheral device and storing said logical port identification, said unique identification information and an assigned status in an entry in the table is in response to a logical port being available, the server suspending processing of the unsigned peripheral for a predetermined time if there is no logical port available and most importantly, the server resuming processing after said predetermined time period and searching said table for reserved status entries and selects a reserved status entry that closely matches, according to predetermined criteria, the unique identification information of the peripheral device that is unassigned and assigns the unassigned peripheral device to the logic port.

These operations, and particularly the selection of reserved entries that closely match unique identification information of the peripheral device that is unassigned and assigns the unassigned peripheral device to the logical port is not taught or remotely suggested by Okada, Kadota or any of the other cited references, including Fujitsuka. This functionality is also claimed in claim 23 and therefore claim 23 should also be allowable for reasons other than the fact that it depends from what applicants believe to be an allowable claim.

Claims 7-11, 13, 14, 16-19 and 21-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Okada and Kadota further in view of Fujitsuka. Clearly

Fujitsuki fails to supply the deficiencies of Okada and Kadota. Applicants also believe that the combination of Fujitsuka with the other two patents is also improper. Fujitsuka is classified in Class 379, subclass 211, which is telephonic communications with the subclass including call forwarding, call diversions, sequential ringing and interception of phone signals that is entirely unrelated to Okada and Kadota. Kadota is classified in Class 345, subclass 501 which relate to computer graphic processing operator interface processing and Okada is classified in Class 710, subclass 5, which is electrical computer and digital data processing systems, with subclass 5 comprising in/out command processing.

The examiner mischaracterizes the true operation of Fujitsuka, and it would be readily apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that Fujitsuka is not relevant to the applicants' invention. Fujitsuka is concerned with changing the mapping of telephone extension numbers to physical lines from any extension. The description of prior art states that the change can already be performed from a management station; the change is to be able to do it from any extension. It is important to note that in the Fujitsuka patent, there really are only physical ports for each phone and the described table merely maps extensions one-to-one to physical ports. There are other differences that demonstrate the inapplicability of Fujitsuka to the present invention. Fujitsuka deals with actual physical ports. One of the capabilities of the present invention is to accommodate USB interconnections where there are multiple devices connected to a single physical port. That could never happen with Fujitsuka's phone extensions. Extension changes are made on command from a user or technician. In the present invention, assigning devices to logical ports is done in such a way that user input is not required. Fujitsuka states that table entries can be marked as unassigned but does not describe any way of assigning those entries except by user command.

Fujitsuka discloses a way to update that table by a user command entered from the source or destination phone extension. The examiner's reliance on col. 6, lines 25-40 that the server queries peripheral devices is not supported by the cited text. The described exchange interfaces with dumb telephone sets that have no way to respond to a query. The only thing remotely resembling a query is a dial tone to prompt the user to enter a transfer extension number. That has no relation at all to querying

intelligent devices like printers that can automatically return their model number, manufacturer serial number, etc.

The examiner's reliance on col. 1, lines 19-30 of Fujitsuka as teaching a method for the server (the telephone exchange) to assign ports to unused entries and to queue them if there are no unused entries is also believed to be misplaced. Fujitsuka is describing a static table where there is one entry for each physical telephone extension line. The only way to change that table is by a user command from one of the extensions. For these many reasons, Fujitsuka does not supply any of the deficiencies of Kadota or Okada.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of all claims pending in the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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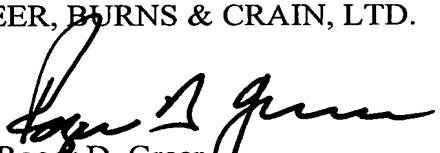
By 
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